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Atari Online News, Etc.
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A-ONE #1624 06/13/14

~ End of the Apple Brand? ~ People Are Talking! ~ New Aranym Released!
~ ACEC 2014 Swap Meet Set! ~ Samsung Tablets Colors ~ Massive Gmail Bug!
~ E3 Winners and Losers! ~ Microsoft Teases at E3 ~ New Games for PS4!

~ Ex-Microsofter Gets Jail ~ ~ How TLS Works for You

-* Microsoft Fights U.S. Warrant *-
-* Aaron Paul Does Some Xbox One Magic *-
-* 3 Popular Web Services Interupted Same Day *-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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Happy Friday the 13th! I haven't seen any black cats, nor walked under any ladders today, but I'm still not having much luck finding ample time to do more with our weekly issues in a timely fashion. So, as has been the "norm" lately, I'll just get the finishing touches on the meat of our issue this week and get it out to you. And, before I forget, our apologies for the tardiness last week; I discovered that we were having some server issues that needed to be resolved before our iissue got mailed out to our subscribers.

Until next time...

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New Version of Aranym Released This Week!

Hi all,

we have binary packages for MS Windows (thanks to Olivier) and Linux systems (thanks to Jens) available for download now:

https://sourceforge.net/projects/aranym/files/aranym/0.9.16/

Enjoy,

Petr

2014/04/12 - version 0.9.16 released @ atariada.cz

Major highlights of this release:

o JIT CPU compiler supported on 64-bit Linux and Mac OS X now!
(Jens made a miracle)

o MFPR FPU emulation should be perfect
(Andreas ironed out few remaining bugs)

o Ethernet support under Mac OS X should be way better

(Philipp added support for big packets and multi-packets)

o new config setting "LoadToFastRAM" to load kernel in FastRAM
(is Andreas working on fixing Linux-m68k issues in FastRAM?)

o David GÆlvez improved NatFeat USB support (now requires FreeMiNT 1.19+)

There's also a small set of bugs fixed in this release - mainly in Mac OS X thanks to Philipp but also some generic things like GPIP (Patrice).
Source: README, updated 2014-06-12

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->A-ONE User Group Notes! - Meetings, Shows, and Info!
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ACEC Vintage Computer and Game Swap 2014

ACEC 2014 VINTAGE COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAME SWAP MEET

COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAME FANS:

The Atari Computer Enthusiasts of Columbus will yet again be holding their annual vintage computer and video game swap meet, this time on Saturday August 23th 2014. This will be the third year at the new location (for those of you who remember the many years at the Community Center):

Maynard Ave. United Methodist Church

2350 Indianola Ave.

Columbus, Oh.

This church is located on Indianola Ave several blocks south of Hudson St. The Swap is held in the downstairs of the facility.

Time for the meet is 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Admission is **FREE** for vendors and shoppers. Vendors: please contact Club Prez Charles Brown to reserve tables. Tables are first come, first serve. There is an initial limit of 2 tables per dealer due to space restrictions. However, Charles is willing to listen; at the very least any remaining tables will be distributed if slots are still available just prior to the day. Reserved tables may be also be released for no-shows at 8:30 a.m. the day of the show.

This is not an exclusively Atari show. All vintage and classic computers and video games, systems, accessories, games, and software are welcome.

Charles Brown will create a floor plan page which vendors may use to pick the table(s) that they desire. Please contact Charlie [colonelatari@hotmail.com] for details.

Please check our web site often for updates:
http://www.angelfire.com/oh4/acec/acec.html

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V/r,

R. Wayne Arenz

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Winners and Losers from E3!
""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""" Uncharted, LittleBigPlanet Coming to PS4!
Microsoft Teases New Crackdown, Halo at E3!
And more!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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Winners and Losers from the E3 Video-game Show

The 2014 Electronic Entertainment Expo wasn't as dramatic as last year's, when Sony and Microsoft were battling for attention in advance of the fall debuts of their new game consoles, the PlayStation 4 and Xbox One.

This year, the focus was on new games to play on those machines, so those of us who attended E3 at the Los Angeles Convention Center this week had a lot more fun. And the competition is far from over. Here are some winners and losers from the video-game industry's biggest convention.

* PLAYSTATION VS. XBOX: Consumers have bought a few million more PS4s than Xbox Ones, but that doesn't mean Sony can rest on its laurels. Upcoming PS4 games include the steampunk thriller "The Order: 1886," new installments of the popular "Uncharted" and "LittleBigPlanet" franchises, and a promising batch of games from smaller studios, like the psychedelic journey "Entwined" and the sci-fi exploration game "No Man's Sky." The Xbox One countered with the goofy "Sunset Overdrive," the haunting "Ori and the Blind Forest" and new chapters of the "Halo," "Forza Horizon" and "Crackdown" series. WINNER: Xbox, by a very slim margin.

* NINTENDO VS. THE SKEPTICS: The Wii U has had a rough time in the market, but Nintendo rewarded its diehard fans this year. There's a new

"Legend of Zelda" game (finally!) on the way. "Splatoon" brings Nintendo-style whimsy to the online shooter. "Captain Toad: Treasure Tracker" is a delightful puzzle game. And the Amiibo line, which connects real-world toys of Mario, Donkey Kong and the rest of Nintendo's heroes to their digital counterparts, has collectors psyched. WINNER: Nintendo.

* OCULUS VS. MORPHEUS: The most heavily hyped technology at E3 involved strapping on a headset and immersing your senses in 3-D virtual reality. Sony showed a few simple demos for its Project Morpheus device, letting you swing swords at a dummy or luge down a busy highway. The Oculus Rift inserts you right into Sega's terrifying "Alien: Isolation," a Mario-style platform game called "Lucky's Tale" and the time-bending shooter "SuperHot." I'm still skeptical about VR's viability â neither headset is particularly comfortable â but Oculus is clearly further along. WINNER: Oculus.

* MULTIPLAYER VS. SOLO: The buzziest demos at E3 were 2K Games' four-versus-one monster hunt "Evolve," Ubisoft's five-on-five SWAT team drama "Rainbow Six: Siege" and Nintendo's four-on-four paintball competition "Splatoon." There were a few solo acts like Sony's "The Order" on the floor, but if you want to play the hottest games this year and next, you had better find some friends. WINNER: multiplayer.

* MOVING VS. SITTING: Motion-detecting game devices that force you to get off the sofa were all the rage a few years ago, thanks to Nintendo's Wii and Microsoft's Kinect. But now that you can buy an Xbox One without Kinect, you can sit down. I saw just one new Kinect game â Harmonix's "Dance Central Spotlight" â and nothing in the Wii U lineup will burn any calories. WINNER: sitting.

'Uncharted,' 'LittleBigPlanet' Coming to PS4

Sony Corp. announced Monday that it's bringing new installments of the popular video-game franchises "Uncharted" and "LittleBigPlanet" to the PlayStation 4 as it celebrated the 6-month-old game console's marketplace triumph.

Sony also premiered "Abzu," an undersea odyssey from the creators of the award-winning "Journey" and "Entwined," a psychedelic 3-D flying game. And it showed new highlights from the steampunk thriller "The Order: 1886" during its annual presentation at the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles.

On the hardware side, the company said it will bring PlayStation TV, its video- and game-streaming device, to North America and Europe this fall. The $99 device lets users stream video, older PlayStation titles and games for Sony's hand-held Vita system to any TV. The "micro-console," which debuted in November in Japan as PSVita TV, also lets PlayStation 4 players send the action to a second TV.

On July 31, Sony will launch the open beta of its cloud-based PlayStation Now service, which will allow players to stream classic games from Sony's older consoles onto newer devices such as the PS4, the hand-held Vita, Xperia cellphones and Bravia TVs.

Sony is also demonstrating Project Morpheus, its virtual reality headset, at E3. That project, however, won't be available to consumers for at

least another year.

Sony has led Microsoft Corp. since both companies began selling their latest consoles in November. Sony has sold 7 million PlayStation 4 consoles to Microsoft’s 5 million Xbox One units. However, both companies have outpaced the sales of their predecessor consoles the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 during the same amount of time. And Sony’s lead is far from insurmountable.

That makes exclusive titles like the just-announced "Uncharted 4: A Thief’s End" and "LittleBigPlanet 3" more important. But one much-hyped PS4 exclusive, the racing game "DriveClub," was conspicuously absent at this year’s E3 presentation. Many of the games Sony showcased Monday including Ubisoft’s "Far Cry 4," Warner Bros.’ "Batman: Arkham Knight" and Deep Silver’s "Dead Island 2" will also be available on the Xbox One, although Sony promised exclusive content or early beta access for each.

One exclusive that will appeal to comic book fans: A live-action drama based on Brian Michael Bendis’ popular series "Powers" will begin airing on Sony’s PlayStation Network in December.

Microsoft Teases New ’Crackdown,’ ’Halo’ at E3

It’s all about the games for Microsoft at E3.

Microsoft focused exclusively on hyping titles coming to its Xbox One and Xbox 360 consoles during its presentation Monday ahead of the Electronic Entertainment Expo, the game industry’s annual trade show.

The new Xbox One games included a fresh installment of the open-world romp "Crackdown"; a reboot of the Xbox action game "Phantom Dust"; the original dragon-centric adventure "Scalebound" from developer Platinum Games; a sequel to the 2013 "Tomb Raider" reboot titled "Rise of the Tomb Raider"; and a "Halo" collection that will bring four prior installments of the sci-fi shooter to Microsoft’s latest console.

Phil Spencer, head of Microsoft’s Xbox division, began the 90-minute presentation by noting that Microsoft changed features of the Xbox One, which launched last November, after listening to consumer feedback.

"You are shaping the future of Xbox, and we are better for it," Spencer told the crowd and cameras broadcasting the event. "Today, we are dedicating our entire briefing to games."

When the company initially unveiled the Xbox One last year at its Redmond, Washington, headquarters, Microsoft billed the $499 console as an "all-in-one" entertainment hub for the living room.

Following criticism, Microsoft backtracked on several requirements for the console, including that it must be connected to both the Internet every 24 hours and to its motion-detecting Kinect sensor. The company began selling a Kinect-free version of the Xbox One on Monday for $399.

Microsoft Corp. has lagged behind Sony Corp. since both companies began selling their latest consoles last November. Microsoft has sold 5 million Xbox One consoles to Sony’s 7 million PlayStation 4 units. However, both

companies have outpaced the sales of their predecessor consoles the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 during the same time period.

"We will continue to listen to you, our community, and will continue to make Xbox for you," Spencer told the crowd at the conclusion of Monday's event. "That's not just my personal commitment, but the commitment of the entire Xbox team."

Other upcoming games teased during the event included the futuristic "Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare," driving sequel "Forza Horizon 2," original cartoony shoot-'em-up "Sunset Overdrive," cooperative fantasy "Fable Legends," and downloadable choreography game "Dance Central Spotlight."

The company intentionally did not reference the entertainment apps or other original programming coming to the popular Xbox Live online service, Spencer said.

"I wanted to use the 90 minutes we're on broadcast TV, here in front of thousands of fans and on the Web, so people can see all of the content, all of the great games they're going to get to play on their Xbox," he said backstage after the presentation. "I think that's why people buy the consoles, and it's important for us to deliver the goods when we're on stage here at E3."

Aaron Paul Xbox One Commercial Accidentally Turns On User Consoles

"Breaking Bad" star Aaron Paul is inadvertently controlling users' Xbox One consoles in a new set of TV ads.

Commercials featuring Microsoft Corp.'s Xbox One began airing last week on June 5, featuring Paul, who highlights a number of features available on the console. Unfortunately, he also speaks a number of commands for the Xbox One, which have been picked up by television viewers' Kinect motion and voice sensors. Commands such as "Xbox On" and "Xbox play Titanfall" were among the commands spoken by Paul that would inadvertently trigger the consoles.

For people without Xbox One consoles, these commands spoken by Paul are entirely inconsequential. But for those that already own the Xbox One, many were surprised to find their video game consoles turning on inadvertently and responding to other commands as the ad aired. Xbox One owners voiced their reactions, which ranged from amusement to displeasure on Twitter:

While the Xbox One's responses to the Aaron Paul commercial highlight the complications surrounding its voice command features, it isn't the first time the commands have been creatively used with the console. When the Xbox One launched last fall, players found creative ways of causing havoc in multiplayer games such as â Call of Duty: Ghosts.â

These creative players would set their user names to Xbox turn off or Xbox sign out, enter a multiplayer match and then harass other players until they spoke their user names, resulting in hilarious but expected results.

Users of the Xbox One can keep the console from responding to voice

commands by disabling the Kinect sensor.

Also, those looking to avoid the use of the Xbox One's voice command features can purchase the Xbox One without the Kinect for the price of $399.

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Microsoft Fights U.S. Warrant

Microsoft continues to fight a U.S. government subpoena demanding that it turn over copies of a customer's e-mails stored at a data center in Dublin.

"Congress has not authorized the issuance of warrants that reach outside U.S. territory," Microsoft wrote in a June 6 court filing to the U.S. District Court in Manhattan, which was made public June 9. The company warned that if the court upheld a previous ruling that U.S. courts could grant domestic investigators search warrants to access information stored overseas, it "would violate international law and treaties, and reduce the privacy protection of everyone on the planet."

Microsoft's legal maneuvers might have been unthinkable a year ago. But last summer, National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden's leaks highlighted the volume of information that the U.S. government was surreptitiously intercepting from the likes of Microsoft, Apple, Facebook, Google, Yahoo and their peers. In light of outrage from customers around the world, technology giants are now battling for greater accountability, transparency and oversight of governments' information requests.

Last week, Microsoft general counsel Brad Smith said in a blog post that its recent legal moves represent "unfinished business on government surveillance reform." In part, Microsoft's actions are intended to reassure overseas customers that it's taking steps to safeguard their information from the U.S. government.

The latest news concerning Microsoft's legal moves was first reported by the New York Times and the Washington Post. Crucially, this case involves a criminal investigation, meaning that unlike matters of national security, accompanying court records can - and have - been made public.

Microsoft isn't the only organization battling the U.S. government's use of search warrants to grab data stored abroad. Verizon attorney Michael Vatis on June 10 filed a friend of the court brief in support of Microsoft, warning the court that giving the U.S. government carte blanche access to data stored by U.S. businesses abroad would have profound implications for cloud computing.

"If the court were to permit the U.S. government to obtain, in a manner contrary to both U.S. and foreign law, customer data stored abroad, it would have an enormous detrimental impact on the international business of American companies, on international relations, and on privacy," Vatis wrote.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation, a privacy rights group, plans to file a friend of the court brief in support of Microsoft in the next couple of days, a spokesperson says.

A spokesperson for Ireland's Office of the Data Protection Commissioner says her office has "no comment to make on this matter."

This legal tussle was first sparked when the U.S. government in December 2013 filed a search warrant related to a criminal investigation seeking data stored in a Microsoft data center in Ireland. In particular, investigators from an undisclosed U.S. agency sought information related to the Microsoft customer's e-mail account, including copies of all messages sent and received with the account, online session access times and duration, as well as records of any payment cards associated with the account.

The identity and nationality of the Microsoft customer being investigated remains under seal.

In April, U.S. Magistrate Judge James Francis rejected a request from Microsoft to quash the December 2013 search warrant, ruling that e-mail providers - including Microsoft and Google - must comply with valid warrants from the U.S. government that require that they turn over any e-mails or customer information stored overseas. Otherwise, the federal judge wrote in his ruling, "the burden on the government would be substantial, and law enforcement efforts would be seriously impeded."

On June 6, Microsoft filed its objection in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, asking the court to dismiss Judge Francis's ruling and quash the December search warrant. Oral arguments in the case are scheduled to be heard July 31. After the court makes its decision, however, there could be further appeals.

Caspar Bowden, an independent privacy researcher and former chief privacy officer at Microsoft, told Britain's Guardian newspaper the case could have repercussions for U.S. businesses trying to compete abroad. "This judgment increases the apprehension EU citizens will feel that their data is not protected under U.S. law," he said. "If the U.S. cloud industry was worried before about lack of confidence of foreign customers, this judgment just upped the ante very considerably - subject of course to any appeals."

Microsoft attorney Brad Smith said in his blog post that the company wants U.S. courts to "recognize that U.S. search warrants end at U.S. borders."

"We're concerned about governmental attempts to use search warrants to force companies to turn over the contents of non-U.S. customer communications that are stored exclusively outside the United States," he said. "The U.S. government wouldn't stand for other governments seeking to serve search warrants within American borders to seize the content of U.S. citizens' e-mails without going through U.S. legal process. Why should it expect other governments to react any differently?"

Microsoft is one of a number of technology companies that’s been urging Congress to overhaul the Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986 for the cloud computing era, starting with strengthening the privacy protections afforded to consumers’ digital communications. Under current U.S. law, government investigators must obtain a search warrant to access any e-mails that are less than six months old. Such warrants must be issued by a judge, and require probable cause. But to obtain for older messages, as well as opened e-mails, the government says it only requires a subpoena, which doesn’t require the approval of a judge, and can be gained if there’s any reasonable possibility that information being sought will be relevant to an investigation.
Nature of Court Order

But Judge Francis, in his April ruling, wrote, in what appears to be the first such judgment, that court orders obtained under the Stored Communications Act - of the type received by Microsoft in December - are a hybrid between a search warrant and a subpoena. On the one hand, the orders needed to be obtained from a judge, and based on probable cause. But on the other, such orders don’t get executed in person - for example, by FBI agents at a data center in Ireland. "It is executed like a subpoena in that it is served on the ISP in possession of the information and does not involve government agents entering the premises of the ISP to search its servers and seize the e-mail account in question," he wrote.

Microsoft and privacy rights groups have warned, however, that if Francis’s ruling gets upheld, then there will be little oversight of government investigations that cross borders. "United States search warrants do not have extraterritorial reach," Lee Tien, a lawyer for the Electronic Frontier Foundation, tells The New York Times. "The government is trying to do an end run."

One Day, Three Popular Web Services Interrupted

We’re not even over Hump Day yet and it’s already been a pretty tough week to be a professional on the Internet, as three separate popular Web services saw service disruptions due to hacks.

Feedly, Evernote, and Tweetdeck all faltered, at least briefly, on Wednesday, as hackers took down each service in separate incidents.

First, both note-taking and syncing service Evernote and RSS reader Feedly were hit with what they said were DoS (denial of service) attacks, whose goal is to make a site unavailable to Web surfers. Though both attacks were successful for stretches, Evernote and Feedly have each released statements assuring users that their data is not in jeopardy.

It isn’t clear if the same hackers attacked both Evernote and Feedly. Evernote’s normal services were interrupted Tuesday, with many unable to access documents and notes stored in its cloud server. According to a tweet posted late last night from the team at Evernote, all seems to be right again, with only the expectation of â a hiccup or twoâ in service for the remainder of Wednesday.

The situation with Feedly, meanwhile, as of Wednesday afternoon, remains dire. Its team explained that ’criminals’ had attacked its servers and shut down its site in an attempted extortion.

"We refused to give in and are working with our network providers to mitigate the attack as best as we can," explained in the post signed by CEO and co-founder Edwin Khodabakchian. â Please know that you data is safe and you will be able to re-access your feedly as soon as the attack is neutralized.â Feedly users are still unable to access their RSS feeds.

Hackers holding sites ransom for cash has become increasingly common. USA Today explored the new web threat in a recent article.

An update late Wednesday morning said that, in order to circumvent the attack, the Feedly team was at work implementing changes to [Feedly's] infrastructure,â and that access should be restored in a matter of hours. At the time of writing, Feedly.com and Feedlyâ s mobile apps are still inaccessible.

For both Feedly and Evernote, there is nothing that you need to do. Once the services reappear, you should be good to log on and use each service as usual.

If these inconveniences weren't enough to disrupt your work this week, word began to spread Wednesday that a nasty security flaw had been discovered in popular Twitter management service Tweetdeck. Everyone using Tweetdeck, which is owned by Twitter, were urged to log out until a fix was put in place. A bug in the code allowed hackers to flash pop-up windows with crude messages, and some Twitter users inadvertently retweeted a post containing a string of code.

Though Tweetdeck itself initially gave the all clear, telling users to log out and log back in to avoid any vulnerability, a fix it was not. Twitter then took Tweetdeck services offline to patch up the flaw; about an hour later, it tweeted an all clear.

If you use Tweetdeck, you need to log out and log back in to avoid any unpleasantness. You can do that from the Settings icon.

Oh, and if all that wasn't enough: The chain restaurant P.F. Chang's was also hacked, potentially leaking thousands of credit cards.

Okay. Who's ready to see what Thursday and Friday have in store!?

Massive Gmail Bug May Have Exposed Every Single User's Address

A huge flaw in Google's wildly popular Gmail service was recently discovered that may have exposed the email addresses of every single user. According to a report from Wired, security researcher Oren Hafif found and helped Google fix a serious bug that left Gmail users email addresses exposed to anyone with a bit of patience. While digging up addresses would have taken quite a bit of time, the report notes that the bug had existed for years before it was fixed, and it easily could have been utilized to obtain every Gmail user s address.

According to the report, the bug would not have exposed any passwords or other sensitive data.

"The exploit involved a lesser-known account-sharing feature of Gmail that

allows a user to "delegate" access to their account," Wired's Andy Greenberg wrote. In November of last year, Hafif found that he could tweak the URL of a webpage that appears when a user is declined that delegated access to another user s account. When he changed one character in that URL, the page showed him that he d been declined access to a different address. By automating the character changes with a piece of software called DirBuster, he was able to collect 37,000 Gmail addresses in about two hours.

Using the flaw, Hafif says he could have obtained the email addresses of every single Gmail user in the world in a matter of days or weeks.

How TLS Keeps Your Email Secure

From its start in 1971, Internet-based email has not been known for its high security. As security researcher Bruce Schneier wrote in a 1995 essay for Macworld on the privacy perils of email: It s like a postcard that anyone can read along the way.

That unfortunate fact is finally fracturing. Email is getting safer for you provided that your mail service and your correspondent's both use a standard called TLS, short for Transport Layer Security. Finally, Google and other providers are starting to turn on TLS for the public.

The move to the use of TLS could have happened more than five years ago: A 1.0 version of the TLS specification emerged only four years after Schneier's essay, and the current 1.2 version dates to 2008. But even as mail services secured people s log-ins, they did not take the extra step of scrambling their messages while in transit.

Those who knew this would commonly comfort themselves with the lost-in-the-crowd theory of security: With some 183 billion messages a day sent back and forth, who would possibly have the time to look for one in particular?

Then one year ago, Edward Snowden began giving a crash course in National Security Agency surveillance, which had the policy and, for the first time in history, the technology to collect everything first and index it later.

After a few weeks of Snowden's revelations, CNET's Declan McCullagh made a simple observation: Gmail supported TLS, but other major email services did not, meaning that a huge chunk of the world s email could be inspected by the NSA and its ilk, because for TLS to work, both sides of an email conversation have to support it.

To make it more difficult for the NSA to simply absorb the world's email, more tech companies took an active interest in TLS, including Yahoo Tech's publisher, Yahoo, which had lagged in its support for encryption, according to the Washington Post.

With the growing use of TLS, the odds are now lower that your email is going out on a postcard. In mid-May, a study by Facebook found that 58 percent of the social network s email notifications to members were going out encrypted. And last week, Google posted similar numbers: 71 percent of messages from Gmail to elsewhere went out encrypted, while 50 percent of those received by Gmail also arrived locked.

There’s your good news: We’ve fixed a core defect in email and reduced the capability of well-meaning friends, family, and business partners to inadvertently risk your privacy by sending sensitive data about you in their own email. And with TLS, you don t have to install any software or change any settings to get its advantage.

The bad news: It’s hard to figure out if your own provider has done its part.

Google’s regularly updated transparency report now includes a section on encryption in transit that lets you check to see if other large mail services do TLS. But it can yield confusing results, and smaller systems (say, your employer s) don t show up.

You can also check for TLS use on any site at STARTTLS.info.

Should you switch?

If you spend any time experimenting with STARTTLS.info, you’ll quickly see how badly many consumer Internet providers’ mail services lag behind webmail. Comcast is turning on TLS one provider at a time, and CenturyLink already supports it. But Time Warner Cable, Verizon, and Cox have not announced plans to enable TLS.

Among webmail companies, Yahoo followed Gmail by turning on TLS in the first quarter of this year, AOL has done the same, and Microsoft is currently rolling out TLS, a spokesperson said.

Checks of Apple’s services show patchy support, and the company did not answer a request for clarification.

There are good reasons to separate your email from your ISP starting with not having to worry about running out of online storage or having to send hundreds of change-of-address notices if you switch providers. But webmail has its own privacy issue: Most of these services are paid for by ads that target the words in your messages.

The price to evade the NSA’s eyes doesn’t have to include subjecting your email to your provider’s advertising robots. Among the four big webmail services that now use TLS, Microsoft and Yahoo let you pay to clean the ads from your account ($19.95 a year at Microsoft, $49.99 a year at Yahoo), while Google will open a new, $50/year ad-free Google Apps account for you at the domain name of your choice.

But how many of you have exercised any of those ad-free options?

Ex-Microsoft Employee Gets 3 Months in Prison for Win 8 Leaks

The ex-Microsoft employee who pleaded guilty to theft of trade secrets will spend three months in prison.

A U.S. District Court judge also fined Alex Kibkalo $100 for his crime.

Kibkalo was arrested in March after he leaked early copies of Windows 8 to a French blogger. The seven-year Microsoft employee first in Russia, then in Lebanon provided documents to the blogger in 2012, just ahead of

the OS launch.

In early April, Kibkalo pleaded guilty to the crime, which included sharing Windows 8 RT software updates, which were distributed only to manufacturing partners, as well as the Activation Server software development kit (SDK).

Microsoft pinpointed the leaker after searching the Hotmail account of the unnamed French blogger. Redmond initially defended the move, but later said that it would change its policy surrounding email snooping.

Microsoft did not immediately respond to PCMag's request for comment.

The Seattle Times published a hand-written letter that Kibkalo wrote to the judge, in which he apologized for leaking the Microsoft docs. "As of now, I deeply regret that I have shared that information," he wrote.

Kibkalo did not elaborate on why he leaked the data, saying only that he made a "wrong decision." He did reveal, however, that he might write a book about the incident, "which might make more people think on this topic."

Meanwhile, the software giant this week updated its Services Agreement and privacy statement, eliminating much of the legal jargon in an effort to make its policies more transparent. The changes also include a more definitive stand against targeted advertising.

The new agreement will take effect July 31; anyone using Microsoft's services after that date will automatically agree to abide by the new terms. If you don't agree, you'll need to stop using Redmond's services, the company said.

Samsung Tablets To Have Richer Colors in Screens

New tablet computers from Samsung will feature screens that are richer in color than standard LCDs.

These screens, known as AMOLED for active-matrix organic light-emitting diodes, are already found in smartphones made by Samsung and a few other manufacturers. But until now, tablets haven't used them because larger AMOLED screens are more difficult to produce.

Samsung Electronics Co. is trying to change that with its upcoming line of Android tablets, called the Galaxy Tab S. On Thursday, Samsung announced two such models, with screens of 8.4 inches and 10.5 inches, as measured diagonally.

The tablets will start selling in the U.S. in July at $400 for the smaller model and $500 for the larger one the same as comparable iPads. Models with 4G LTE cellular access are expected later in the year.

Samsung is the world's second-largest maker of tablets, behind Apple and its trend-setting iPads. In recent years, Samsung has been gaining market share at Apple's expense by offering a wide range of sizes and quality.

Earlier this year, it unveiled a "Pro" brand aimed at professionals. The "Tab" brand has been used on Samsung's budget tablets and don't come with a stylus, as Samsung's "Note" tablets do. With the new screens, Samsung is elevating the Tab line to become its flagship tablet.

Besides producing richer colors, AMOLED allows tablets to be thinner and use less power because screens typically don't require backlighting. But IHS analyst Sweta Dash said the performance gap between AMOLED screens and regular LCDs has narrowed, while AMOLED screens can cost 10 to 30 percent more to make.

Samsung does have the advantage of making its own screens, and the South Korean company can afford to reduce profit margins on tablets if that boosts volume and reduces costs on the screen-production business. What it learns from making tablet screens might even help it one day make affordable AMOLED television sets.

Samsung did release an AMOLED tablet in 2012, but it was expensive and didn't sell well. The new ones will be priced more competitively.

The tablets are a quarter of an inch (6.6 millimeters) thick, which is thinner than iPads. The smaller version is also lighter than the iPad Mini, while the larger one is about the same as the iPad Air.

The new tablets will sport displays of 2,560 pixels by 1,600 pixels, matching what's found in the Pro series. By comparison, Apple's iPad Air is at 2,048 pixels by 1,536 pixels. Apple markets its displays as "Retina" and doesn't believe more pixels will necessarily be discernible to the eye. Apple is expected to refresh its iPad lineup this fall.

Until now, iPad rivals have succeeded largely by undercutting Apple on price, and better hardware hasn't been enough, said Rhoda Alexander, director of tablet and monitor research at IHS. AMOLED screens could change that, she said, because colors will pop out when compared side by side at a Walmart or a Best Buy.

The new tablets will also let people make calls when a Samsung phone is nearby and to unlock the device with a fingerprint. The tablets can support up to eight user profiles, so members of a household can get separate home screens simply by swiping their finger on the sensor.

Is This the End of the Apple Brand As We Know It?

Apple's recent acquisition of Beats has gotten many people wondering if the Apple brand is as strong as it once was. Some see the surprising move as a significant departure from the strategy that has built Apple into the one of the greatest brands of all time and they consider it a proof point of the decline of the Apple brand cachet.

On the surface, the development does seem like a radical change. For the first time ever, Apple will operate under another brand name. No other Apple offering carries a name other than Apple and the decision to use of Beats name suggests to some that the company views it as the stronger, or at least, cooler brand name today.

And in the past Apple's corporate strategy has favored a build vs. buy growth strategy, which has given the Apple brand name strong associations

with invention and originality. At $3BB, the Beats acquisition is so large (the company s next biggest buy was NeXT Computer back in 1997 for just over $400 million) and so publicly promoted (media has been saturated with the news, in part as a result of Apple s own PR machine) that it seems to be repositioning Apple as a more typical technology brand one that is less based on unique creations and more based simply on new capabilities.

The Beat deal is also surprising because it installs Jimmy Iovine and Dr. Dre as key players in the newly combined organization. Apple s brand equity used to bank heavily on one person, Steve Jobs and all other key players, even current CEO Tim Cook, were considered insiders, Steve s disciples. With the addition of such high profile outsiders, the brand seems to have lost the tie to Jobs and the purity and commitment to Steve s way.

On the other hand, though, the acquisition may not be all that much of a change for the Apple brand. Apple achieved brand supremacy when integration became a core business driver. ITunes first revolutionized music by integrating content with hardware and software. Then the iPhone revolutionized communications by integrating hardware and software (apps). Now this Beats development is likely to create an equally disruptive change by integrating content with wearable hardware and personalized service. Last year Tim Cook accurately explained in an interview at Duke s Fuqua School of Business, The reason Apple is special is we focus on hardware, software, and services. And the magic happens where those three come together.

Also, the use of the Beats name may actually have less to do with promoting the Beats brand and more to do with preserving the exclusiveness of the Apple brand. In February, Cook stated in a Wall Street Journal interview, We re not going to put Apple s brand on something someone else designed. While his comment was made in reference to the development of low-cost smartphones, it does reflect the company s vigilant protection of the Apple brand. Putting the Apple name on Beats products might actually detract from the integrity of the Apple brand more than would the company using the Beats name on the products and services it offers. The company could have been accused of co-opting another brand or operating as a brand poser.

And the tie "Steve’s way" might actually be advanced by the Beats deal. Jobs himself once said that he admired Bill Gates for his skill in striking smart partnerships. I think if Apple could have had a little more of that in its DNA, it would have served it extremely well, Jobs remarked. Might a deal like the one with Beats is just the thing Jobs aspired to?!

So perhaps there isn’t as much cause for concern over the Apple brand - at least not in the near term. The biggest question mark the Beats deal raises is really about corporate culture. No longer is the leader of the company like a rock star the company actually has two rock stars on its payroll. And no longer are the designers and engineers the cool kids on the block. Content may actually become king. It s unclear if Apple employees will be as inspired by Iovine and Dre, and it they will play by their visions and along with their teams.

Internal culture shapes external brand perceptions more strongly than might be obvious. The ties between the cultures and brands at Zappos, Facebook, and Google among others attest to this. So the extent to which the Beats acquisition changes Apple s corporate culture is really

the key factor in determining the long term fate of the Apple brand. And for that, only time will tell.

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